# Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

DECEMBER 1991

## General Council Seeks Input On Proposed Goals

The UFMCC General Council is inviting comments from all MCC members on its tentative goals.

The General Council goals, which are listed below, were developed at the October 1991 council meeting. More than two years ago, in March 1989, the council began a long-range planning process. In the latest step of the process, the goals were developed to assist in planning through 1997.

General Council members are aware that they need input from throughout UFMCC in order to set meaningful goals. This is an opportunity for all UFMCC members to respond.

### Organizational Goals

**Fellowship Level**

1) Restructure of financial systems
   a. insure all pastors have living wages
   b. fully funded full-time executives
   c. own our Fellowship Headquarters property and location
2) Restructure of governance
   a. restructure of administrative body of denomination
   b. restructure to recognize national/international interests
   c. to deal with redistricting

**District Level**

1) Establishment of more churches
2) Leadership goals
   a. better trained pastoral leaders
   b. enhance intervention powers in chartered churches
   c. redefine electoral procedures for district coordinators
3) Financial goals
   a. full-time fully paid district coordinators
   b. adequate support staff
   c. develop retirement plans
   d. salaries for new work leadership

### Mission Statement Goals

**General Goals**

1) Promote grassroots study, education, and discussion on the mission statement
2) Ensure that Fellowship level programs, structures and budgets reflect an awareness of and commitment to the General Council mission statement
3) Encourage districts, World Church Extension Areas, local churches to express commitment to the mission statement in their structures and programs

*{Continued on pg 3}*

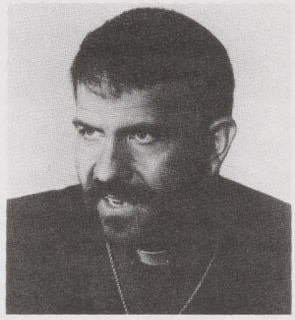
As part of its evaluation process, the council invites comments on the goals. The council will continue discussion of these tentative goals at its March and October 1992 meetings. At its March 1993 meeting, the council will adopt its final list of General Council goals, which will then be presented at General Conference. After conference approves the final list, the goals will be used to set the direction for all denominational-level ministry.

The International Concerns Research and Development Division (ICRD) of the General Council will summarize the comments received. Please direct all correspondence on the goals to ICRD in care of the Fellowship Offices. The following deadlines will be observed:

| For General Council Meeting | Correspondence Receipt deadline |
|---|---|
| March 1992 | February 28, 1992 |
| October 1992 | August 31, 1992 |
| March 1993 | January 31, 1993 |

## A Christmas Message

### *From Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, founder of UFMCC*



*Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry*

Almost 2,000 years ago a child was born to a teenager and the world has never been the same. For the first time in history God's plan for the millennium to come was revealed to humanity through the Christ Jesus. No more war; no more death; only eternal peace and eternal life, and it all started with the birth of one child.

This is the time on the Christian calendar when we celebrate that birth with the holiday of Christmas. Also, a few days later we celebrate New Years, the start of a new beginning. How thankful we all are for this special time of remembering how good God is to us in giving us God's greatest gift, God's self in flesh, who came and dwelt among us.

This Christmas will be a wonderful time of celebration all over our Fellowship, a time when we celebrate how good God has been to us this last year, and that we have another opportunity to share with our loving family.

This last year we have seen a remarkable change in the world. With the fall of the Iron Curtain in eastern Europe, we really can say "Peace on earth - goodwill to humankind."

*{Continued on pg 4}*

# *Editorial Policy and Other Measures Proposed*

The General Council invites UFMCC members to give their input on how the following policies or procedures might effect them. The motions below have been passed by the General Council as First Readings, and will be submitted for final adoption as Second Readings at the March 1992 Council meeting. Please submit any written responses to the Clerk of the General Council through the Fellowship Offices by February 15, 1992.

▼91.10.CL.01 MOVED that Program agencies of UFMCC that do not supply corrected Bylaws/SOP's to the Corporate & Legal Division in a timely manner will be referred to the Program & Budget Division of General Council for assistance in assuring compliance.

▼91.10.GC.04 MOVED to adopt the proposed Editorial Policy for *Keeping in Touch*.

{Proposed Editorial Policy for *Keeping in Touch*}:

*Keeping in Topuch* must be guided by the mission statement approved by the General Council: "UFMCC empowers people to bring Christian salvation, Christian community, and Christian social action to the world."

The basic purpose of *Keeping in Touch* is to provide the following (in order of importance):

1) News: Information about recent and upcoming events of interest to UFMCC, such as conferences, General Council actions, new church buildings, etc.

2) Features: Inspirational, human interest, and humorous material about UFMCC.

3) Resources: Information that readers can use in their ministry, such as program ideas.

As UFMCC's official monthly newsletter, *Keeping in Touch* presents a balanced view of the entire Fellowship. This means that all districts and World Church Extension areas will be covered, all UFMCC programs will be covered, and UFMCC policies on inclusivity will be reflected in the content. Because of space limitations, only material of Fellowship-wide interest can be included.

Covering UFMCC itself is the top priority, but news about other organizations and national/international events will be included when they have significant impact on UFMCC members.

*Keeping in Touch* is the official newsletter of UFMCC. Therefore, its content does reflect official UFMCC viewpoints. Implementation of this editorial policy rests with the Editorial Board, which consists of the Moderator of the Board of Elders, the Director of Administration and the *Keeping in Touch* Editor. They will review the content and sign an approval form before each issue is printed. If the Moderator is unavailable, the form will be signed by either the Vice Moderator or the Second Vice Moderator.

*Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution to UFMCC members and friends. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution to *Keeping in Touch*. Permission is needed for other distribution. ❐

## *Clergy: Check Your Status*

The annual "Certification of Clergy Status" forms have been mailed to all active clergy. These forms are due at the Clergy Credentials and Concerns (CCCC) Office by Jan 1. Please note two changes as a result of General Conference action: 1) The status of "Clergy in Residence" is not a valid status as all clergy must be in an active ministry, and 2) Clergy with forms not returned by Jan. 1 will be placed on inactive status and may appeal by submitting the form with a $25 fee and a letter of explanation for the lateness of the form. The CCCC will then hear all submitted appeals at its annual March meeting. Please consult General Conference directives book for specific details of these actions.

Also, notices have been sent to all clergy whose credentials expire in 1992. Licensure applications are due at the CCCC office by March 1. The application as found in the 1990 edition of the *Clergy Manual* will still be valid for this next cycle.

The 1992 edition of the *Clergy Manual* will be available in January. Advance copies may be reserved by contacting UFMCC Church Services. The price will be $45. ❐

## *Best Wishes for a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year from:*

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nHorn✪RaviVerma✻FrankZerilli✻
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Staff

*Keeping in Touch* is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Editorial Board:
Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

# District Conference Round-Up

## Southeast District Hosts Bishop Spong

The Southeast District hosted "the best district conference we ever had" Nov. 14-16, said District Coordinator Tom Bigelow.

Guest speakers included Bishop John Spong, an Episcopal bishop and an outspoken advocate for lesbian and gay Christians. More than 200 people registered.

The conference marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Southeast District, which was the first district created within UFMCC. It was also the 20th anniversary of the host church, MCC Tampa, FL.

With this conference, the Southeast District successfully tried a new conference schedule: The conference opened at noon Thursday with a worship service, and all district business was completed by Thursday evening. Thursday night concluded with the district's first healing service. This schedule allowed all delegates to attend workshops throughout the rest of the conference, which officially ended Saturday morning.

"I believe pastors should be back in their pulpits on Sunday," Rev. Bigelow said. "This way they could all go home without feeling guilty." Activities continued throughout Saturday for those who could stay. Rev. Bigelow said this schedule was so successful that his district will follow it from now on. ❐

## Great Lakes District Sets Records

New records were set at the Great Lakes District conference held in Louisville, KY, in October.

Well over 300 people attended worship Sunday morning, and there were 290 at the banquet. Official registration surpassed 200.

More than $2,000 in offerings was received. All of this, plus proceeds from the conference itself, goes toward district ministry.

District Coordinator Judy Dale reports that all of the workshops, sharing groups and other activities were well received. She said that highlights of the weekend included the variety of worship services, music, the district's first healing service and the baptism. The district is establishing two new task forces; one will plan a music retreat for the district and the other will address parents' issues. ❐

## European North Sea District Holds Biggest Conference

Registration surpassed 100 at the European North Sea District Conference held in Manchester, England, in mid-November.

For the first time, a visitor from Poland was expected to attend. The conference drew people from six countries. ❐

## Mailing List Update

UFMCC is updating its mailing lists as the entire office switches over to a new computer system.

If you have had problems recently in receiving *Keeping in Touch* or other mailings, please send your address to Fellowship headquarters so the mailing lists can be complete and correct. We regret any inconvenience caused by the updating process. ❐

## Mid-Atlantic District Accomplishes Much

The Mid-Atlantic District Conference was "wonderful and we accomplished a lot," said District Coordinator Adam DeBaugh. The conference was held in October in Rockville, MD.

A motion was passed calling on the district to engage in a dialogue about the General Conference XV non-binding resolution about spiritual diversity. The District Conference Planning Committee will consider this for the May 1992 District Conference. A $50,000 budget was passed unanimously. ❐

## Gulf Lower Atlantic District Dreams Together

Rev. Jay Neely, Gulf Lower Atlantic District Coordinator, reports that the district conference held in Chatanooga, TN, Nov. 1-3 was great. The theme was "We, Too, Can Dream," with 225 persons registered and more than 300 in attendance at the Saturday evening worship.

Rev. Neely predicts that the next district conference in April will be the largest gathering of lesbians and gay men in Mississippi history. ❐

*(General Council Goals; cont'd from pg 1)*

### Mission Statement Goals: Cont'd

### Christian Salvation Goals

1) Promote dialogue and develop a holistic inclusive view of Christian salvation
2) Teach the acceptance and value of diversity in salvation experiences
3) Give the world an inclusive view of Christian salvation that honors the individual and communal journey

### Christian Community Goals

1) Develop and make available workshops for leadership and local congregations to address the issues of: ageism, sexism, homophobia, classism, differing ability, grief and dying, and racism in a multicultural, enlarging world view
2) Develop and promote models of Christian wholeness, healing, self-care, and reconciliation in the church that break patterns of dysfunction
3) Educate and empower all leadership on how to build, celebrate, and serve Christian community

### Christian Social Action Goals

1) Educate the Fellowship about making connections between evangelism, justice, liberation, meeting human needs, and environmental issues. Also, making connections between ourselves and other justice movements in the Church and in the world
2) Evaluate, assess, and monitor internal Fellowship justice issues through the new Secretariat on Equality and Justice. Use this information to keep reforming the UFMCC
3) Transform the energy and rage around homophobia, injustice, grief, poverty, aging, AIDS and other illnesses, into positive plans and programs. Do this jointly with other justice workers ❐

## 'Tis The Season for Secret Meetings

This is the time of year when church boards of directors may hold their only legal meeting in the absence of the pastor.

The only agenda item, of course, is to decide on a Christmas present from the church to the pastor. Don't forget others who serve the church as well! ❐

## Pastors of Mid-Sized Churches Meet

A number of pastors from churches with 90 to 225 weekly attendees met at General Conference to discuss church growth, common interests, and the need to work together in a positve atmosphere.

Organizers of the group include Rev. John Jacobs, pastor of Church of Our Savior MCC in Boca Raton, FL; Rev. Wendy Foxworth, pastor of MCC Austin, TX; and Rev. Jim Burns, pastor of MCC New Haven, CT.

Interested pastors of churches meeting these criteria are invited to send information on their church's size, its needs, and any other comments to Rev. Jacobs at 4770 Boca Raton Blvd., Suite C, Boca Raton, FL 33431. ❐

***{Christmas Message from Rev. Perry; Cont'd}***

I am delighted to announce that Rev. Elder Jean White, Executive Secretary for World Church Extension, shared with the General Council in our October meeting that the first service of MCC in Poland will be held in Warsaw on Christmas Eve!

What a fitting time to thank God again for God's mercy to all of our community.

Saints, I pray we continue to work and to fight the good fight that God has given us as we celebrate, one more time, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Savior.

All because of the birth of one little child... ❐

## Australian Women's Ministry Reaches Out

The Women's Task Force of MCC in Australia was asked to present a three-hour workshop on women's spirituality at the Fourth National Women's Music Festival held in Lismore, New South Wales, in October.

The task force also held a Women's Celebration at Lismore City Hall just prior to the main concert of the weekend.

Every year this music festival is attended by 600 to 800 women from all over Australia and from overseas.

"This is the greatest evangelical witness the District of Australia has attempted to date," the task force said. "And we invite members of all MCC congregations to participate with us. We are suggesting a three-prong involvement: pray for us, publicize this outreach, and/or support us in a pecuniary effort."

Women's Task Force members who planned to attend were Rev. Heike Weber and Ms. Barbara Olejniczak. Rev. Weber is pastor of Epiphany Women's Community in Preston, Victoria, a special work of the Australian District, and Australia's only female MCC clergy. Ms. Olejniczak is Australian District lay representative and sold hats at General Conference to raise funds for Epiphany Women's Community.

Getting them to Lismore for the weekend was expected to empty the financial resources of this ministry group. The women said they were willing to take this financial step in faith, believing it is God's will that they reach out to share Christ's love with the assembled women.

Supporters may contact Rev. Weber at Epiphany Women's Community, PO Box 376, Preston, Victoria 3072, Australia. ❐

## Large Church Conference Set

The next meeting of pastors of large churches will be in Washington, D.C. May 8, 9, 10, and 11, 1992 (Friday-Monday). The pastors of churches which meet the following criteria are invited to come and share in this exciting weekend.

If your average Sunday attendance is 250 or greater, you have two or more full-time employees, and your church has been listed in the top 20 tithes list during the previous six months, you are urged to participate in the conference.

The Large Church Conference is a time for mutual support, idea sharing, self-nurture, planning, and resource development. The 1992 Washington meeting will be the fifth conference.

For more information, please call MCC Washington at (202) 638-7373. ❐

## Rev. Pieters in Print

A new book by Rev. Steve Pieters, UFMCC Field Director of AIDS Ministry, is now available.

*I'm Still Dancing! A Gay Man's Health Experience* was published recently by Chi Rho Press, a special work of the Mid-Atlantic District. It is a collection of journal entries, sermons and articles about Rev. Pieters' struggle with AIDS. ❐

# Around The Fellowship

## Praises

**MCC Washington**, DC, launched a church finance bond issue on Nov 15. The church intends to raise $900,000. **Rev. Larry Uhrig**, pastor, said the church is in a good financial position with several hundred thousand dollars in cash. Construction has already begun.

The **Great Lakes District** recently approved the following new works: **Divine Peace MCC** in Hazel Park, MI; **Joy of Life MCC** in Waukegan, IL; and the **John Hose Center**, a special work in Chicago, IL.

**Christ Alive MCC** in Vancouver, Canada, is the first spiritual group to be invited to the University of British Columbia AIDS Conference. This is western Canada's largest AIDS-related conference for medical, allied health care and education workers. This year the spiritual aspect is being addressed for the first time.

**MCC Eugene**, OR, held its sixth annual AIDS Vigil for 24 hours ending at 6 p.m. Dec 1, World AIDS Day. Local clergy and lay leaders from area churches led the vigil. Each year MCC Eugene raises about $2,000 to directly benefit people with HIV or AIDS.

**MCC Dallas**, TX, has officially changes its name to Cathedral of Hope MCC of Dallas in order to "reflect the unique vision God has given to this church." **Rev. Michael Piazza**, pastor, reports that the church unanimously adopted a $440,000 general fund budget plus a $252,000 building fund budget.

**MCC Toronto**, Canada, had worship services in its new church home Nov 10 with 851 in attendance for morning worship.

**MCC Philadelphia**, PA, celebrated its 20th anniversary in October.

**Samaritan Family Services**, the self-supporting counseling service of **MCC Huntsville**, AL, received a $7,500 grant in November from Chicago Resource Center.

**Divine Redeemer MCC** in Glendale, CA, and **Ocean of Life MCC** in Costa Mesa, CA, each celebrated its 10th anniversary in November.

**MCC Rockville**, MD, voted unanimously in September to take out an $87,000 mortgage to finance completion of its lesbian and gay community center once $100,000 in cash is raised. **Rev'd. Ken Ehrke**, pastor, reports that the church has already raised $83,000. ❐

## Prayers

During this Christmas season, may there be peace on earth and goodwill among all people.

**Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson's father** is seriously ill. Rev. Wilson flew to New York on short notice, to be with him.

**Rev. Robert Pierce**, pastor of **Church of the Trinity MCC** in Sarasota, FL, continues to need prayer as he lives with AIDS.

## Transitions

After six years of ministry in Abilene, TX, **Rev. Ed Paul** has left Exodus MCC to serve as associate pastor at **Harvest MCC**, Denton, TX.

**Mr. Dan Brauer** is the new pastoral leader at **Reconciliation MCC** in Grand Rapids, MI. Mr. Brauer plans to be licensed next year.

**Church With A Vision MCC** in Longview, TX, has elected **Ms. Mary Hinsey** as pastoral leader. Ms. Hinsey, a former Baptist missionary, was student clergy at Agape MCC of Ft. Worth, TX.❐

## Church Openings

The following churches have pastoral vacancies:

**MCC Seattle** is seeking a Senior Pastor. If you are interested or wish information, please contact Roberta Booth at 5321-156th Dr. NE, Redmond, WA, 98052; (206) 883-8352.

**Trinity MCC** in Gainesville, FL has a pastoral vacancy and is accepting applications. To receive a Pastoral Search Packet write to: Pastoral Search Committee, Trinity MCC, 11604 SW Archer Rd., Gainesville, FL 32608. ❐

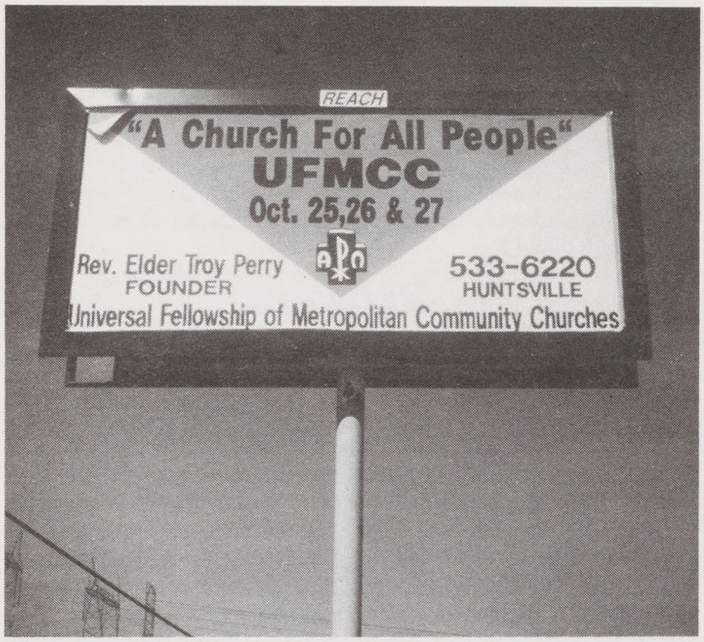
## Top 20 Tithes - October 1991

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft Lauderdale, FL | US$ | 2,479.75 |
| 2. | MCC Washington, Washington, DC | | 1,957.85 |
| 3. | MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX | | 1,647.90 |
| 4. | First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS | | 1,292.78 |
| 5. | MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA | | 1,241.80 |
| 6. | MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA | | 1,205.49 |
| 7. | St Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL | | 1,204.99 |
| 8. | King of Peace MCC, St Petersburg, FL | | 1,018.57 |
| 9. | MCC Austin, Austin, TX | | 862.77 |
| 10. | Agape' MCC, Ft Worth, TX | | 818.10 |
| 11. | MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO | | 807.17 |
| 12. | MCC New York, New York City, NY | | 788.62 |
| 13. | All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, MN | | 763.11 |
| 14. | Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL | | 658.90 |
| 15. | Christos MCC, Toronto, Canada | CAN$ | 545.24 |
| 16. | MCC San Antonio, San Antonio, TX | | 479.11 |
| 17. | Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL | | 476.05 |
| 18. | MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM | | 468.82 |
| 19. | MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA | | 449.43 |
| 20. | MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA | | 427.93 |

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's income that is sent to Fellowship headquarters.}

## Top 20 Per Capita - October 1991

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA | US$ | 37.40 |
| 2. | Maranatha MCC, San Lorenzo, CA | | 30.17 |
| 3. | MCC/Gentle Shepherd, Vancouver, BC | CAN$ | 24.85 |
| 4. | MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA | | 24.03 |
| 5. | Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX | | 23.43 |
| 6. | New Covenant MCC, Walnut, CA | | 21.88 |
| 7. | Overlake MCC, Bellevue, WA | | 21.79 |
| 8. | Christ the King MCC, Oklahoma City, OK | | 21.69 |
| 9. | MCC in Charlottesville, Charlottesville, VA | | 20.82 |
| 10. | MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA | | 20.54 |
| 11. | MCC Rockville, Rockville, MD | | 20.36 |
| 12. | Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL | | 18.48 |
| 13. | MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA | | 18.21 |
| 14. | Whitewater Valley MCC, Richmond, VA | | 17.13 |
| 15. | Redeemer MCC of Flint, Flint, MI | | 16.98 |
| 16. | MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX | | 16.85 |
| 17. | Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY | | 16.76 |
| 18. | MCC Austin, Austin, TX | | 16.43 |
| 19. | Christos MCC, Toronto, Canada | CAN$ | 15.94 |
| 20. | New Life MCC, Charlotte, NC | | 15.92 |




***"I almost wrecked my car*** *when I saw that great big pink triangle with the name of my church on a billboard," said a member of MCC Huntsville, AL. Rev. Janet Pierce, pastor, said the church discovered that billboards were an effective way to publicize its fifth anniversary celebration, featuring UFMCC founder Troy Perry. As a result, combined Sunday attendance reached 250, setting a new record for the church. "We may do other positive billboard messages for the gay and lesbian community," she said.*

## *Charismatic Conference Planned*

The seventh annual Charismatic Conference is being sponsored by MCC Long Beach, CA, Feb. 7-9, 1992.

The theme for the conference is "Equipped to Serve," based on John 14:12, "Greater works than these shall you do." The conference will feature a wide variety of workshops and the following guest speakers: Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Los Angeles, CA; Rev. Phyllis Mann, Phoenix, AZ; Rev. Delores Berry, Norfolk, VA; and Revs. Dusty Pruitt and Duane Moret, both of Long Beach.

Registration is $25 until Jan. 15 and $30 thereafter. For reservations or more information, contact MCC Long Beach, 1231 Locust Ave., Long Beach, CA 90813; (310) 432-3641. ❐

## *EXCEL is Looking for Couples*

EXCEL International, UFMCC's lay renewal ministry, is seeking committed couples to help develop a new retreat program. The program is designed to help couples strengthen their relationship through centering their relationship in Christ. EXCEL hopes to form a retreat team of three or four couples who will put on a couples weekend after an intensive training period. Training will be based on a retreat manual that has been specifically written for the program, as well as other materials the team wishes to contribute.

Couples interested in forming a team must be willing to train intensively for a year-long period and should be graduates of EXCEL I. If interested please contact Ms. Brenda Blizzard (313) 775-6663 for an application. Deadline is Jan. 15, 1992. ❐

## *UFMCC Encouraged by NCC Discussion*

Despite pressure to halt dialogue with UFMCC, the National Council of Churches (NCC) General Board received a groundbreaking report from the NCC-UFMCC Dialogue Committee Nov. 14 in Indianapolis, IN.

"The response from NCC General Board members was encouraging," said Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Field Director of Ecumenical Witness and Ministry. "During the meeting several members voiced their appreciation and their belief that our dialogue will show other denominations how to create a safe space to explore lesbian and gay issues."

Rev. Cherry and Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson are UFMCC's representatives on the dialogue committee. They attended the meeting in Indianapolis, along with Ms. Judy Dale, Great Lakes District Coordinator; Rev. Stretch Weisman, pastor of Jesus MCC in Indianapolis and many members of her congregation; Rev. Nancy Smiegowski, pastor of New Hope MCC in Milwaukee, WI; and Rev'd. Michael Niece, pastor of New Spirit MCC in Cincinnati, OH.

With this report, the NCC acknowledged for the first time that gay and lesbian issues "run across the face of American Christianity as a great seismic fault, which with little or no warning may erupt" and that "the issue of homosexuality appears to be firmly entrenched within the lives of many (NCC) member communions."

The report, which was covered in the *Los Angeles Times* and other major publications, also breaks new ground by pointing out the connections between the growth of UFMCC, the impact of AIDS, the emergence of militant lesbian and gay rights groups, and the increased organization of gay and lesbian people and their supporters within NCC member denominations.

The NCC-UFMCC Dialogue Committee's main task for 1992 is coordinating local dialogues between MCC churches and other congregations. These dialogues will provide the basis for bilateral and multi-lateral national dialogues. ❐

## *Christian Lesbians Convene*

Snow may have paralyzed most of Minneapolis, MN, on Halloween night and for the following two days, but this same record-breaking storm sheltered 72 members of Christian Lesbians Out Together (CLOUT) through their first nation-wide conference, "A CLOUT of Witnesses," Nov 1-3. About a dozen MCC clergy and lay leaders attended. Rev. Coni Staff of the UFMCC Women's Secretariat was one of the conference organizers. Rev. Kit Cherry attended as UFMCC's Field Director of Ecumencial Witness and Ministry.

Sheltered within the storm, the women recognized their collective strength. Through ritual and worship, through workshops and story telling, they shared memories of struggle and visioned a future where each could fully and openly live her faith.

Spirit of the Lakes United Church of Christ in Minneapolis hosted the gathering which brought women together from places such as Florida, Texas, California and the East Coast, as well as from throughout the Midwest.

It has been exactly one year since ten women met in New York to discuss what it means to be out of the closet and be a Christian. Within three months of that initial meeting, CLOUT had been formed and 113 women from 14 denominations had already signed a Statement of Commitment.

For more information about CLOUT, contact Selisse Berry, 1111 1/2 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 550-7796.❐